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SUBJECT: TURKISH MEDIA REACTION
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2009

In Today's Papers

Gerceker: Trust in Judiciary on Decline
Media outlets report the Court of Appeals (Yargitay) President Hasan Gerceker delivered Monday a speech on the opening of the new judicial year. Speaking obliquely, Gerceker issued warnings about the ongoing Ergenekon case, saying some mistakes were harming the impartiality of the judiciary. Gerceker said the public was following with concern the wrong implementations, and the prolonged detention of suspects. He added that trust in the judiciary was declining. Gerceker also criticized the planned changes in the High Board of Judges and Prosecutors (HSYK), and stressed that the legislative and executive organs should not be authorized to elect the members of the board. "Otherwise," noted Gerceker, "the parliament will pave the way for the politicization of the judiciary." He said the government was trying to transform the members of the judiciary into bureaucrats, and thus create a "biased" judiciary. Gerceker also voiced objections to reforms in the judiciary, saying that Turkish democratic consciousness was "below European standards."

AKP Wants 'Closed Parliamentary Session' on Kurdish Initiative
Mainstream Vatan and Islamist-oriented Zaman report the ruling AKP, in an effort to convince the opposition regarding the Kurdish "democratic initiative," wants to hold a "closed session" in the parliament with opposition parties after the month of Ramadan is over. The AKP is expected to tell the opposition that the Kurdish move was not a matter of the government, but that it was a matter of the state. Papers also expect PM Erdogan to ask for an appointment with CHP leader Baykal after Ramadan.

Turk: DTP is Not the PKK's Political Wing
Milliyet and Radikal report Kurdish DTP leader Ahmet Turk said his party was "not the political wing of the PKK." Turk said the ruling government's "Kurdish initiative" could not succeed without convincing the PKK, and that the DTP would support the elimination of violence from Turkey's agenda. "The DTP is not the political wing of the PKK. We want a solution to the Kurdish problem under Turkey's unity," said Turk. He added if a solution was not found, the clashes would begin again, and the Kurds would suffer again. Turk also criticized opposition CHP's leader Deniz Baykal for

"provoking" people to take to the streets in protest.

Editorials on Debate Over Government Efforts: Reforms, and Kurdish and Armenian Initiatives

Okay Gonensin wrote in mainstream Vatan: "The gap between deeds and words is one of Turkey's main eternal problems. Just like political initiatives on certain problems, we constantly talk about reform in the judicial system yet real action never follows the rhetoric. Given the current judicial reform draft designed by the government, there is no hope for the future either. The Turkish judicial system will remain under political structure's clout."

Emre Kongar wrote in leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet: "Turkey has the capacity as well as the power to address both its internal and external problems, and normalization with Armenia is certainly one of those. The Armenian issue, however, comes along with several complexities including the Diaspora, Azerbaijan, the US, Minsk Group and Russia. The question is whether the ruling AKP has the experience and knowledge of diplomacy to handle the intensity of the problem? One wonders how come the AKP will proceed on the Armenian initiative which requires reconciliation and dialogue, especially given a few past records of its own, such as intolerance to any voice of opposition, imposition of its values and its effort to turn an Armenian church to a mosque."

Ali Bayramoglu wrote in Islamist oriented Yeni Safak: "The current debate in Turkey stems from the strong need for change. Turkey is going under a process of significant changes which will redefine the relationship of individuals with state and political structures."

ANKARA 00001309 002 OF 003

That is something long overdue."

Erdal Saglam wrote in mainstream Hurriyet: "Interestingly enough, neither Minister of Economy nor the Central Bank were successful in convincing Prime Minister Erdogan on the need for a loan agreement with the IMF. The Prime Minister did not want it from the very beginning and given the recent statement at high levels, including by the Central Bank Governor, Ankara is getting ready for a no-IMF period in the economy. However, a successful outcome of this policy requires both the announcement as well as the immediate application of a series of fiscal discipline measures - something we do not have now and possible we will not have."

'Peace Road' Project to Link Europe and the Caucasus (Sabah)
Mainstream Sabah reports the parliament was preparing to debate before approving a project for the construction of a 7,000 km of highway linking the Caucasus to Europe. The project had been developed in April 2007, when Turkey joined 12 BSEC countries in signing a related memorandum of understanding for the construction of the highway. The highway will pass through 12 countries and 24 cities (including Edirne, Istanbul, Batumi, Baku, Yerevan, Bucharest, Sofia, Belgrade), and 1,985 km of it will pass through Turkey.

CB Governor Yilmaz: Turkey Doesn't Need the IMF
Papers report that at a G-20 meeting in London, Central Bank governor Durmus Yilmaz said Turkey will not need the support of the IMF as long as the government maintains "tight fiscal discipline." Business daily Referans reports the AKP government expects the current deficit gap to narrow to less than USD 10 billion this year from USD 41.7 billion in 2008. Turkey and the IMF have been discussing a possible loan of between USD 20-40 billion for over a year.

Death of Afghan Civilians Put Two States At Odds (Sabah)
Mainstream Sabah reports, "a recent airstrike on a pair of hijacked fuel tankers killing as many as 70 civilians in Kunduz, Afghanistan, has put Germany and the US at odds: the German troops ordered the bombing and the US side took the action." While the US military officials stated that the order came from Germany, German Prime Minister Angela Merkel called for a NATO investigation and an urgent Afghanistan summit. Sabah also notes, "given that German people are already not happy with the military deployment of German forces in Afghanistan, the strike in Kunduz will put PM Merkel in trouble"

during the September 23rd elections. " Meanwhile, leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet headlines, "NATO Fills the Shoes of Taliban," and reports, "Afghan people think the foreign forces are as dangerous as the militants."

US Doubled Weapons Sales At Crisis (Zaman)
Mainstream Hurriyet, Islamist-oriented Zaman, leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet are today carrying straightforward coverage on the US increasing 50 percent of its weapon sales in 2008 despite the economic crisis. Based on a New York Times report, papers note the US has increased the sales level to 37.8 billion dollars. In "US Carries its Leadership with 37.8 Billion Dollars," mainstream Hurriyet notes, "new customers from the Near East and Asia are the source of this increase as well as previously made contracts." Islamist-oriented Zaman also notes, "US Exports to Middle East states are striking," while mainstream Hurriyet notes, "Arabs Are the Best Customer of the US."

TV News (CNN Turk)

Domestic

- The trial of Ergenekon suspects continues in Istanbul's Silivri district.
- Foreign Minister Davutoglu visits Georgia for the settlement of the disputes between Georgia and its separatist region of Abkhazia.

ANKARA 00001309 003 OF 003

- Deputy Prime Minister Bulent Arinc said at a fast-breaking Ramadan dinner in Manisa that Turkey would "take off" if it manages to solve its Kurdish question.

- Prime Minister Erdogan chaired Monday a meeting of government officials in which medium term economic program was debated.

World

- The European "Independent Committee on Turkey" says in a report "outside pressures" to make Turkey accept Armenian 'genocide' claims have backfired, and says the two sides should resolve their differences among themselves.

- Turkey declines to sign an EU declaration upholding press freedoms.

- An Iranian commander says Iran has developed a new system that can detect and destroy cruise missiles.

- A Swedish aid agency says that American soldiers raided one of its hospitals in Afghanistan last week.

- A Sudanese woman put on trial for wearing trousers escapes the lash but is jailed after refusing to pay the fine imposed for "indecenty."

SILLIMAN